

A script from



# **“Stable Mabel”**

A Christmas Play

by

Don Bosley

## **SYNOPSIS**

Mabel may be the lead goose in this barn, but tonight her stable environment is shaking with the news that a new baby king may have to be born here. As she and her animal friends scramble to prepare the place, their efforts are sabotaged by a couple of the bullying King's Horses - pretty ponies who will do anything to keep a new king from coming onto the scene.

## **Length**

Approximately 30 minutes

## **CAST**

### **Sammy Lamby**

Sheep, female a young female sheep and spy wannabe

### **Gimpy**

Goat, male a grumpy old country goat. Views everyone else as an addle-brained whippersnapper.

### **Molly**

Mule, female, a gullible mule with insecurity issues

### **Cam**

Camel, male, a mellow camel with a plodding pace

### **Mabel**

Goose, female, a goose of good manners and impeccable organization

### **Sterling**

King's Horse, male, the King's Horses, both Brooklyn tough-guy attitudes

### **Stella**

King's Horse, female, the King's Horses, with Brooklyn tough-guy attitudes

### **Mary**

Mother of Jesus, female

## **MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECT CUES**

- CUE 1- Playful, private music (pg. 3)
- CUE 2- Chaotic music; loud crashing sound effect (pg. 5)
- CUE 3- Stirring or patriotic music (pg. 15)
- CUE 4- Enthusiastic and lengthy audience applause track (pg. 18)
- CUE 5- Sneaky music (pg. 22)
- CUE 6- Chase music (pg. 23)
- CUE 7- Upbeat music (pg. 26)

## **COSTUMES AND PROPS**

- Appropriate costumes/makeup for each animal
- Oversized TV remote
- Walkie-talkie
- Cane
- Medicine bottle
- Spoon
- Saddles (two)
- Blankets
- Head of lettuce
- Banner that says "Welcome, Baby King!"
- Clipboard
- Chairs
- Beanbag
- Party decorations
- Cheesy art
- Obnoxious corner lamp
- Manger / feeding trough
- Swaddled doll (as Baby Jesus)

## **DIRECTIONS GUIDE**

- Upstage- US
- Upstage Left- USL
- Upstage Right- USR
- Downstage- DS
- Downstage Left- DSL
- Downstage Right- DSR
- Center Stage- CS
- Downstage Center- DSC
- Upstage Center- USC

## **PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS**

All the staples of good children's theatre apply here: interaction with audience, big physicality, music and sound effects, lots of pratfalls, and a couple of crazy chases. The audience space should be considered part of the playing space. An added bonus for children's theatre is the opportunity to make characters available for "autographs" after the show, thereby giving the actors a perfect platform to talk about the message as they interact with kids (and adults).

*CUE 1, opening music. Presently we see **Sammy Lamby** sneaking in, probably through the crowd. She tries to blend in, then quickly moves to another place and tries to blend in again. She’s really not very good at it, and keeps looking over her shoulder in suspicion. After playing for a few laughs, she moves DSC and – without looking at the audience – tries to get the children’s attention, sleuth-like.*

**Sammy:** Pssst!

*She immediately looks away, as if it wasn’t her. Then she tries again.*

**Sammy:** Psssssst! *(Beat)* You there! *(Beat)* Yeah ... you! Seen anything *suspicious* around here? *(Beat)* No? *(Pointing)* You! What about you? You seen anything suspicious? Aha! *(Pointing)* There, what’s that?! *(Moving quickly to an audience member)* Oh...oh, it’s just a *(Dora sweatshirt, shiny shoes, frilly hair bow, etc.)* For a minute there I thought it was... well, I’m not allowed to say. *(Speaking into walkie-talkie)* Crazy Penguin, this is Wool Pajamas. It appears that the barn is secure, over. *(Beat)* Roger that.

**Sammy** puts away the walkie-talkie and moves DSC.

**Sammy:** Sorry about that, folks. Didn’t mean to frighten anyone. You’re probably wondering who I am.

*Beat. **Sammy** is waiting; no one is asking.*

**Sammy:** Okay, I’ll tell you. *(James Bond-like)* They call me Lamby. Sammy Lamby. And while it’s probably not obvious to you, I’m a detective. Yap, that’s right– I work *undercover*, talking to sources, gathering information, finding out what’s what. I probably know things about you that *you* don’t even know. I’m sneaky. I blend in. One minute you see me *(plasters herself to a wall, floor, or post)*... the next you don’t. Yesiree, I get around, all right. I’ve seen a few barns in my day, I don’t mind telling you. Big barns. Little barns. Barnes and Noble. *(Chuckle)* Little barn humor there. You know, this place actually reminds me of one of the favorite barns that I ever hung around in. It was a stable, actually, but kinda the same thing. And one night, a long time ago? Man, some crazy stuff shook down in *that* stable. Would you like me to tell you about it?

*Response from children.*

**Sammy:** You would? All right *(pulling out oversized remote)* Now the best way to tell this story is to use one of my special detective gadgets... the magic clicker. You’ve probably never seen anything like this, because you’ve got to be properly trained to use one of these babies. I just push “rewind” on my magic clicker *(does so)*, and we’ll go back, back, back in

time (*walking backwards, herky-jerky like on rewind*), back to that night in question (*all kinds of backwards antics – laying down, eating dinner, whatever*) ... and, "pause."

*She stops going backwards – a little dizzy and breathing heavily.*

**Sammy:** Whew! Here we are. Now, what you need to know about this quiet little stable is that the lady in charge was a goose. A goose named Mabel. Stable Mabel, they called her, because she always liked to keep things organized and quiet and peaceful and...

*Suddenly, CUE 2, chaotic chase music and a loud crash as **Gimpy** bangs into something on entry. He hobbles along quickly on his cane.*

**Gimpy:** Get away from me, ya vultures!

**Molly:** (*Pursuing and pleading*) Gimpyyyyyy!

**Gimpy:** I ain't a-gonna do it, no way, nohow! Ya can't make me!

**Cam:** (*In somewhat casual pursuit*) Coome on. We go through this every time.

***Gimpy** continues running away, taking the chase into the crowd or around the venue as appropriate. **Sammy** has slipped out of the scene.*

**Gimpy:** Back! Back, I say! I'll call my lawyer!

***Mabel** enters, carrying a medicine bottle and a spoon.*

**Mabel:** Gimpy, you old goat! You come take this medicine right now, or there's going to be trouble!

**Gimpy:** (*Brandishing his cane*) You'll never take me alive!

**Molly:** Gee, Mabel, I think he means it!

*In brandishing his cane, **Gimpy** now has no support, and falls over. Crash! Perhaps a verbal yelp or 'Whoa!'*

**Mabel:** Quick! Get him!

***Gimpy** scrambles to his feet, and the chase is really on now. Add in all kinds of bits, all four of them moving in and out of the crowd, darting around the venue. **Gimpy** grabs an audience member's hat, sunglasses or sweatshirt and disguises himself in the crowd.*

***Mabel, Molly** and **Cam** lose him for a moment, perhaps running right by him. But, with help of the children, they eventually spy him. **Gimpy** drops the disguise and limps away*

*hurriedly, with the others in pursuit. Presently they return to the stage, where **Gimpy** gets cornered. The other three move in "menacingly."*

**Mabel:** *(Brandishing spoon full of medicine)* A-ha!

**Gimpy** *thinks for a moment, then brandishes the cane.*

**Gimpy:** A-ha!!

**Mabel:** *(Taken back)* Oh! Oh, my!

**Gimpy** *charges them, using the cane like a sword. **Mabel, Cam** and **Molly** squawk and begin running away. Now the chase ensues in reverse, with **Gimpy** pursuing the others through and around the crowd. At some point, **Cam** pulls the same disguise stunt that **Gimpy** pulled earlier. Presently they work their way back on the stage, where **Gimpy** corners them with the cane.*

**Gimpy:** Say yer prayers, goose! And mule! And camel!

**Gimpy** *takes a big swing with his cane and misses, and his momentum causes him to fall face-down, facing the audience.*

**Mabel:** Now, Cam!

**Cam** *throws himself dogpile-style on top of **Gimpy**, who reacts to the crush with a look of shock and pain, and with his mouth flying open in a silent scream. As it hangs there, **Mabel** smoothly slips the spoonful of medicine right in. **Gimpy** coughs and sputters, and **Cam** casually gets off of him.*

**Gimpy:** Bleah! Ugh! *(Eying **Cam**)* I think ya broke my *other* leg, you crazy camel!

**Cam:** *(Smile)* Goat-squashing is one of my hobbies.

**Cam** *settles comfortably on a hay bale.*

**Mabel:** Gimpy, you ought to know better, you old goat. If you don't take your medicine, you're never going to get better.

**Gimpy:** Bah! I hate medicine! I hate camels! And I hate living in a dirty little stable!

**Mabel:** If you think the stable's too dirty, then perhaps you should do something about it.

**Molly:** You want us to clean the stable, Mabel?

**Mabel:** If you're able. Come on, everyone! Let's tidy up!

*She and Molly begin to clean.*

**Gimpy:** You know what else I hate, is taking orders from a high-falutin' goose! Back me up on this, Cam! We should be doin' better than this! Here we are, a couple of prime specimens of high-grade Mediterranean livestock, stuck in a nowhere stable, out behind a nowhere motel, with a bunch of nowhere people in it, out in the middle of nowhere!

**Molly:** *That's depressing...*

**Mabel:** We're not a nowhere stable, Molly. To the travelers who stop at the inn, we're a very important stable. We provide a comfortable resting place, food, and friendship for their animals.

**Gimpy:** Friendship? Excuse me, we're supposed to provide friendship? I'll show 'em friendship, all right. I'll give 'em friendship right in the kisser, if they keep trying to sleep in *my* bed. Some of them don't even bother to change the hay when they're done!

**Molly:** Um...we're supposed to change the hay?

**Gimpy:** And you wanna know who's the worst? It's them dern cows that drive *me* crazy! Always mooooo-in' and chewin' (*demonstrating, exaggerated*). And always acting like *their* milk is better than goat's milk! Just because it comes from a bigger udder!

**Molly:** An udder? What's an udder?

**Gimpy:** You don't know what an udder is?

**Molly:** Another what?

**Gimpy:** Not "another" – an udder!

**Cam:** Right. Like the Bible says, "love one anudder".

**Gimpy:** No, no, no, ya lame-brain! An udder is where milk comes from on a cow!

**Molly:** I thought it came from the fridge.

**Mabel:** All right, all right. Enough chit-chat now, everyone. We've important things to do.

**Gimpy:** Important things? *Important* things? Like what?



**Mabel:** Well, like... *(beat...then yelling)* Stable evacuation drill!

**Molly:** Huh?!

**Gimpy:** Aw, naw!

**Mabel:** You heard me! *(Running around frantically)* Stable evacuation drill! Line up, everybody!

**Mabel** begins making a siren noise, flapping her wings and making a ruckus. **Cam** and **Gimpy** don't move; **Molly** darts this way and that, unsure what to do.

**Molly:** Stable evacuation! Stable evacuation!

**Gimpy:** We don't need no stable evacuation drill, Mabel. It's a waste of time.

**Mabel:** Oh, a waste of time, is it? You'll thank me when a big wind comes up and the barn is about to fall!

**Gimpy:** Every time you start *talking* it's like a big wind coming up, ya gung-ho goose!

**Mabel** begins blaring her verbal siren again, as she runs around. Suddenly she runs smack into **Sterling** and **Stella**, two very handsome-looking horses who have entered. They carry saddles and blankets. **Mabel** bounces off them and falls to ground, her siren silenced.

**Sterling:** Well-a, well-a, well-a, Stella. What have we got here?

**Stella:** Looks like a stable, Sterling.

**Sterling:** And a very sterling stable it is, Stella. Sorta reminds me of... a really big house made of, like, popsicle sticks!

**Stella** and **Sterling** laugh derisively.

**Stella:** Yeah! Yeah! *(To Gimpy)* Hey, Gramps, does this stable get cable?

**Stella** and **Sterling** bust up again. **Molly**, **Cam** and **Gimpy** look at one another, confused.

**Mabel:** *(Standing, clearing throat)* A-hem. May I help you?

**Sterling:** Yeah, Toots, you can help us. Who's the lead goose around here?

**Cam**, **Molly** and **Gimpy** all point at **Mabel**.

**Sterling:** Great!

**Sterling** and **Stella** hand their saddles and blankets to **Mabel**. The weight buries her, and she falls in a heap again with the equipment.

**Sterling:** We're Stella and Sterling. We're the king's horses.

**Molly:** Wow! The king's got two horses?!

**Sterling:** The king's got about 50 horses, Skippy. Our whole regiment is passing through town on our way to a big celebration at the palace. But it seems all the other inns and stables in town are full, so we got shipped over here for the night.

**Stella:** *(Sarcastic)* Yeah, lucky us.

**Mabel:** *(Emerging a little dazed from under saddles)* Well, do you have a reservation?

**Sterling:** *(Chuckling)* Reservation?

**Stella:** *(Also)* Escusa?!

**Sterling:** Maybe you didn't hear us right, Senorita Honker. We're the *king's* horses. We have reservations wherever we want to have them. And I think I'll be reserving me a spot riiiiight...here.

**Gimpy:** Hey, that's my bed!

**Sterling:** *(Plopping down)* Yeah, well, I hope you didn't leave any goat fleas, Pops.

**Gimpy:** *(Offended)* Goat fleas?! Goat fleas?! *(Turning to Molly, scratching his neck as though he has fleas)* What's he mean by that?

**Molly** shrugs.

**Stella:** *(To Cam)* Yo, camel! Looks to me like you're sleeping in my spot.

**Cam:** O contraire, horsie. I'm wide awake in your spot.

**Cam** grins casually at **Stella** and doesn't move.

**Sterling:** *(Also threatening Cam)* Move it, ya humpback. Or else.

**Mabel:** Now, see here! You simply cannot charge in here and begin bullying the other animals about!

**Stella:** *(As they turn on Mabel)* Is that so?

**Mabel:** *(Shakily)* Yes, that's so. This...um, is an orderly stable...where we respect the rights of everyone...and, um...

*She notices **Sterling**, who has pulled out a head of lettuce from his travel bag.*

**Mabel:** What are you doing?

**Sterling:** I'm getting ready to play my favorite barnyard game.

**Mabel:** Ah. Mm. And what, pray tell, might that be?

**Sterling:** It's called "Duck, *duck*, goose!"

**Mabel:** I beg your pardon?

**Sterling:** I said, *duck!*

***Sterling** throws the head of lettuce "at" **Mabel**; she squawks and ducks. **Stella** catches the lettuce, and they commence throwing it back and forth, chasing **Mabel** in the middle and forcing her to duck each time. Chasing and ducking music accompanies. **Sterling** and **Stella** yell "Duck, goose!" or "Duck!" every time they throw it. Finally...*

**Sammy:** *(Entering with remote, pointing it)* Pause!

*All action on the stage freezes; **Sammy** walks among them.*

**Sammy:** Can you believe those king's horses?! Do you think they need some better manners? I think so, too. Fortunately for Mabel, a hero is about to show up and save her. And do you know who that hero is? *(Grinning, thumbing her own chest)* Oh, yeahhhhh. Asright. You know her, you love her, you've bought all her albums! The one...the only...*Sammy ... Lamby!*

***Sammy** clicks the remote, and the action continues as before, with **Stella** and **Sterling** momentarily chasing **Mabel**...but then they all stop to notice **Sammy**, who's leaning against something and gasping, out of breath.*

**Sterling:** Hey! Where'd the sheep come from?

**Molly:** It's Sammy Lamby!

**Stella:** She, like, appeared out of nowhere, Sterling!

**Sammy:** *(Gasping)* Baby...*(gasp)* baby...

**Gimpy:** Baby, baby?

- Molly:** She's singing a love song!
- Sammy:** (*Shaking her head*) Baby...out there! (*Gasp*) Out there!
- Mabel:** Out there? Good heavens, she's found a baby out there in the desert! (*Sammy shakes her head; Mabel doesn't notice*) We must save it! Mount up, everyone! To the baby!
- Sammy:** No (*gasp*)...no... (*gasp*) LADY with a baby. (*Gasp, gasp, rounding her belly like a pregnant woman*) Lady gonna have a baby...
- Cam:** You're gonna have a baby, Sammy?!
- Molly:** Auuugh! Boil some water!
- Gimpy:** Tear some sheets!
- Cam:** Paint the nursery!
- Sammy:** Not me, you numbskulls! I'm not having a baby. (*Gasp*) Look, I was out running with the Fourth-Street Flock, see. And they tell me about this woman and her husband who are on their way to town, right? And they say she's going to have a baby any minute, you know? And get this – are you ready? This baby that she's going to have ... is going to be the *king!*
- Mabel:** The *king?! She's gonna have a baby, and the baby's going to be king?!*
- Sterling:** Whattaya talkin' about, the baby's gonna be king.
- Stella:** Yeah. We got a king – and he ain't no baby.
- Sammy:** This kid's supposed to be the *real* king. I checked all my sources on this one, guys. My mother's brother Frankie...Fluffy Joe down at the city gate...Old Cottonpants over at the temple stable...they all swear it's true. Apparently, you ain't never seen a king like the king this kid is gonna be.
- Mabel:** Oh, my goodness! How exciting!
- Molly:** A new king! Wowwwww!
- Cam:** Right on.
- Sterling:** Hold on, hold on. Now lookie here. We're the king's horses.
- Stella:** Yeah!

**Sterling:** And ain't nobody told us about no new king.

**Stella:** Got that right.

**Sterling:** As the king's horses, we'd be the first to know if there was a new king coming.

**Stella:** *Word!*

**Sterling:** So you know what I say?

**Stella:** *Come on!*

**Sterling:** I say that anybody who goes around talking about a new king is disloyal to the *real* king. (*Staring down **Sammy***) I say that anybody who goes around telling everybody about a new king...anybody who does that, ought to be in really, really big trouble. (*Menacing to **Sammy***) And that includes you, buddy.

**Sammy:** Don't call me buddy. I'm a ewe.

**Sterling** looks at **Stella**, confused; **Stella** shrugs.

**Sterling:** (*Believing he's been insulted*) What'd you say to me?!

**Sammy:** I said, I'm a ewe.

**Sterling:** You're-a me?

**Sammy:** No, I'm a ewe. A ewe is a female sheep.

**Sterling:** I'm a female sheep?

**Sammy:** No, a ewe is a female sheep.

**Sterling:** No, I is not!

**Sammy:** Look, I'm not saying you're a female sheep. I'm saying a ewe is a female sheep.

**Sterling:** And I'm sayin' I isn't!

**Sammy:** Listen, try to get this: I'm a ewe!

**Stella:** You're-a him?

**Sammy:** No! Ewe! Ewe!

- Stella:** *I'm a him?!*
- Sterling:** Make up your mind, man!
- Gimpy:** *(Aside)* These guys are denser than Mabel's meat loaf!
- Cam:** Look, horsies, try and connect the dots here, okay? A female sheep is called a ewe. She...is a female sheep. She...is a ewe.
- Sterling:** She...is-a *not-a* me! And the next person who says that is gonna really get it!
- Stella:** *(To Sammy)* I am-a me, he is-a he, and *you* are-a you.
- Sammy:** That's what I'm saying!
- Stella:** Then say it!
- Sammy:** I did! *(To kids)* Isn't that what I said?!
- Mabel:** Oh, enough of this silliness. We have more pressing matters: a new king is about to be born!
- Molly:** Mabel's right! Where's the king going to be born, Sammy?
- Sammy:** That's what I was startin' to tell you, before Mr. and Mrs. Horsefeathers here butted in. The man and the woman are looking for a place here in our town for the baby to be born, but here's the thing: there *is* no place! I've checked all the hotels and inns everywhere, and they're all full!
- Mabel:** All of them?!
- Sammy:** Every last one!
- Molly:** Oh, no! They're going to get here, and go around looking, and find no place to say... and then where's that new baby going to be?!
- Gimpy:** Out in the cold street.
- Mabel:** Or out in the desolate desert!
- Molly:** It's a catastrophe!
- Cam:** Even our innkeeper doesn't have any room?
- Sammy:** He's booked full!

**Gimpy:** Well, then, I say we go into that inn and throw out some of those king's soldiers to *make* some room.

**Sterling:** Just try it, ya old goat.

**Mabel:** Simmer down, now. Nobody's going to throw anybody out of any of the hotels.

**Stella:** Got that right. Listen to the goose.

**Mabel:** Instead, we're going to make a place to welcome that baby right here.

*The others all freeze and stare at her for a beat; then they all break out in uproarious laughter.*

**Mabel:** I'm quite serious!

**Molly:** A king born in a stable, Mabel?!

**Gimpy:** Whoever heard of such nonsense!

**Sterling:** I think you're goosey is a little loosey upstairs (*gesturing crazy*), if you all know what I mean!

**Mabel:** Our stable may be humble, but we can make it warm, we can provide food like milk and eggs, and we can use the hay to make it as comfortable as possible.

**Sterling:** (*Laugh*) Personally, I think he'd be more comfortable out in the street!

**Stella:** Got that right!

**Mabel:** The street is where our new little king is going to end up if somebody doesn't take some initiative and do something!

*All the animals start arguing all at once. After a moment, **Sammy** steps out and presses the pause button. Everyone else freezes.*

**Sammy:** This arguing part kinda went on for a long time. Some of the animals wanted to welcome the new king, and some didn't. It's probably better if we just fast-forward a bit.

***Sammy** hits the fast-forward button, and the animals mime fast-forward argument for a few seconds, moving very quickly. Possible dub over of fast-forward sound. **Mabel** is explaining, **Gimpy** is complaining, **Molly** is fretting, **Cam** snoozes and barely moves, and*

**Stella** and **Sterling** keep trying to intimidate. Finally, **Sammy** hits the pause button again. They all freeze.

**Sammy:** There. Like most arguments, you're probably better off skipping most of it.

**Sammy** hits the play button; the **Animals** come back to life, normal-speed.

**Mabel:** Now see here. I'm not going to allow my new king to sleep in the street. I am going to make a place ready for him.

**Molly:** But Mabel, how do you know if this baby really *is* the king?

**Gimpy:** That's what I'm sayin'.

**Mabel:** *(Beat; sigh)* I just know.

**Molly:** But, Molly, shouldn't we listen to the royal horses? They're the ones who know what a real king looks like. Just ask them!

**Mabel:** No, Molly. *This* is the king. I'm certain of it.

*CUE 3 stirring or patriotic music behind this speech. Mabel turns earnestly to the others.*

**Mabel:** Listen to me, all of you. Even though I'm just a loosey goose...and even though we're just a bunch of lowly animals...and even though nobody thinks we're important or even needed...even though people may think we're dirty...or stupid...or useless...or insignificant...*we have a chance here!* Don't you see? We have a chance to receive the king...make ready a place for him...take our humble place and make it as worthy of a king as we can make it! It's the chance of a lifetime! And right now, *we're* the ones in a position to do it...no one else! We've got to do it! What do you say?

*The Animals look uncertain.*

**Mabel:** *(To children)* What do you say? Should we make our place ready for the new king?! *(Anticipate response from children)* All right, then! Let's do it!

**Sammy:** Let's do it.

**Gimpy:** By golly, let's do it like it's never been done!

**Cam:** We'll make a place for that baby, right here in the hay!



**Mabel:** Indeed, we shall! (*Holding up fistful of hay*) Operation Hay Baby is underway!

**Sterling:** (*To **Sammy***) Hay Baby?

**Sammy** slaps him; **Sterling** drops.

**Sammy:** Don't you try to "Hey, Baby," me, pal.

*Sammy steps out and hits the fast-forward button. The animals speed up again- **Molly, Cam, Mabel** and **Gimpy** cleaning and decorating the stable, maybe trying different pieces of furniture. At some point, **Molly** brings in a banner or poster that says "Welcome, Baby King." **Mabel** directs her how to change it. The **Horses** generally get in the way of the others and sit back laughing at them.*

**Sammy:** (*As action goes on behind her*) So that's how we decided that our little stable, as silly as it seemed, was going to be the place that would welcome the little king. We didn't have much time. I mean, the new king could be here any minute! So Mabel got us cleaning and decorating, and decorating and cleaning, and getting everything ready at high speed. It was a big job. It's hard to do a quality stable on a modest budget these days! But we tried...

**Sammy** hits the remote again, and the action returns to normal speed. **Mabel** is standing with a clipboard, talking to **Cam** and **Molly**.

**Mabel:** Now, then. We'll hang the artwork that the chickens did over there... (*pointing*)

**Molly:** Chicken art! Got it!

**Mabel:** And we'll try and create a sort of sitting area for the mother in the back room, don't you think? Something with some soft blues and pinks, very relaxing...

**Cam:** Like, that'll be a perfect place for the espresso machine.

**Mabel:** Yes, exactly, the espress- Oh, now, Cam, that's ridiculous!

**Molly:** It is?

**Mabel:** Yes. He knows full well we can't afford an espresso machine!

**Cam:** (*Crestfallen*) Would you go for fruit smoothies?

**Gimpy** brings in a gaudy-looking corner lamp.

**Mabel:** Goodness gracious! What is that?!

**Gimpy:** Whattaya mean, what is it? It's a lamp!

**Sterling:** *(Calling over)* Hey, that's brilliant, Gramps! Where ya gonna plug it in? Electricity hasn't been invented yet!

*He and Stella laugh.*

**Gimpy:** It's for decorative purposes, Pony Boy.

**Cam** drags in a bean-bag chair.

**Mabel:** Cam...what on earth?

**Cam:** *(Shrug)* Bean-bag chair. Everybody loves a bean-bag chair. *(Drops the chair and flops into it)* Bean-bag chairs are groovy, man. Every little king should have one.

**Mabel:** Um...I'm not certain it matches the décor, Cam...

**Sammy** enters with a feeding trough.

**Sammy:** Hey...hey, check this out. No crib for a bed? No problem. You stuff a little hay in the feeding manger, and presto! A resting place fit for a king!

**Molly:** You want...the little king to sleep...in there?!

**Stella:** *(Huge laughter)* Hee hee hee!

**Sterling:** Haw, haw, haw!

**Stella:** That's a good one! You're gonna let your *king* sleep in a feeding trough! I hope your goat doesn't get hungry in the middle of the night, or he might nibble the little guy's toes off!

**Mabel:** You two just need to shush now.

**Sterling:** If you ask me, you all should pluck the goose and make a good feather mattress for the kid!

**Stella:** Now I'd be willing to help with *that!*

**Mabel:** Perhaps it would be best if we just set the decorating aside for now. Let's work on something else. Oh, I know! Line up, everyone! It's time to practice manners and etiquette!

**Cam:** *(Pinky cleaning out his ear)* Etiquette? What's etiquette?

**Molly:** Ooo! Ooo! Is an etiquette the same thing as an udder?

**Gimpy:** Whattaya-? Ya can't get milk out of an etiquette, ya dense donkey!

**Molly:** Maybe if you tried really hard...

**Mabel:** Etiquette means proper and accepted standards of behavior. For example, whenever the baby king comes into the room, it would be proper etiquette to bow.

**Sammy:** No problem.

*CUE 4, enthusiastic and lengthy audience applause track. **Sammy** steps DSC and begins bowing as an entertainer would– to three different sides, blowing kisses to the crowd, pounding chest here and there, raising arms in triumph, etc. This goes on for a minute, as the other Animals watch. **Mabel** taps her foot, eyes her watch and waits. It finally ends, and **Sammy** saunters back into line.*

**Mabel:** I meant, bow *humbly*. *(Demonstrating)*

**Sammy:** *(Confused)* What's the point of *that*?

**Mabel:** Lowering yourself before the king to show proper respect. When you bow like *you* did, you're only glorifying yourself.

**Sterling:** These guys wouldn't last one day in the court of a *real* king.

**Mabel:** Let's try something else. Let's say the baby's Father walks up and puts the baby right in your arms. *You* actually get the chance to carry the king with you wherever you go!

**Stella:** That would never happen!

**Mabel:** How do you carry Him?

***Cam, Gimpy, Molly** and **Sammy** look confused. They shrug and begin talking amongst themselves.*

**Molly:** I don't know!

**Sammy:** By the neck, maybe?

**Cam:** Maybe football style would work... *(puts nearby object on his forearm, like a football, and strikes a Heisman Trophy pose)*

**Gimpy:** Naw, naw, you make him stand up and walk, like a man!

The **Animals** continue to discuss and argue.

**Mabel:** Listen up, listen up! (*As they quiet*) The proper way to carry a king with you is with utmost reverence and respect.

**Molly:** And etiquette!

**Mabel:** You watch every step very carefully. We're talking about the *king* here.

**Sterling:** (*Rising, crossing to them*) You're talking about a joke, is what you're talking about, goose.

**Stella:** (*Joining him*) Got that right.

**Sterling:** If there really is a baby out there– which I doubt– then he ain't no king. Okay? And if that baby shows up and his parents actually want to bring him to this stable– which is ridiculous– then it would only *prove* that he isn't a king!

**Stella:** Preach it.

**Sterling:** (*Demonstrative, in their faces*) Because real kings don't stay in tiny, dirty, insignificant stables full of funny, foolish, barnyard animals who take their orders from a goose, no matter how good their manners are! Y'all are dreamin! Tomorrow when our regiment comes back to get us, we'll show you what a *real* king looks like.

**Sterling** exits. **Stella** tries to think of something clever to say, but finally...

**Stella:** Yeah!

**Stella** exits also.

**Gimpy:** Them's gotta be the most high-falutin' horses I ever met. I hope they both get saddle sores!

**Molly:** (*Shakily*) Um...Mabel? Excuse me, sorry. (*Pulling Mabel aside*) I think I need a counseling moment here. Um...I'm thinking maybe the king's horses are right, you know?

**Mabel:** Now, Molly...

**Molly:** I mean, look at them. They're so perfect and proper and-and...white and...beautiful, and, you know, they *do* know what a real king looks like,

Mabel. And me...I'm just a dumb mule. What do I know? I'm not even a good mule! I'm not even stubborn!

**Mabel:** Yes, you are!

**Molly:** Okay, I am.

**Gimpy:** Don't agree with her! Be stubborn!

**Molly:** *(Wailing)* Ohhhh...you see? I'm a pushover! A dumb pushover! An ugly, dumb, unstubborn pushover! And they're so big and white and beautiful ...

**Sammy:** *(Aside, to Cam)* Horsie envy.

**Cam:** Classic.

**Mabel:** Now, now, Molly. Chin up! You may not be as smart or beautiful as the king's horses, but you've got something that they don't. And we all know what *that* is.

*She looks to Cam, Gimpy and Sammy, who all look confused a moment.*

**Gimpy:** No, we don't!

**Cam:** Not a clue.

**Sammy:** She's toast. The horses win at everything, hands-down.

*Molly is looking forlorn, with a quivering lip.*

**Mabel:** Oh, stop it, now. Molly has *heart!* Guts! Grit! Character!

**Cam:** She does?

**Molly:** I do?

**Mabel:** Of course, you do! We all have! And that heart is something that those proud, pretty horses don't know anything about. Any king who's a *good* king is going to recognize your heart immediately, Molly. And he's going to love that heart! Just you wait and see.

**Cam:** Come on, Molly. I'll get you an espresso.

*Mabel exits with arm ... uh, wing ... around Molly, and the others follow.*

In a moment, **Stella** and **Sterling** poke their heads in from the other end of the stage. They sneak in quietly.

**Sterling:** Are they gone?

**Stella:** (*Checking*) Yeah...yeah, they're gone.

**Sterling:** I tell ya, Stella, these barnyard bums are driving me crazy. Talkin''bout 'lady with a baby,' and the 'new king,' and 'getting ready for the king'.

**Stella:** I blame the goose, myself.

**Sterling:** Yeah. (*Snotty mimicking*) Mayyy-bull! (*Walking like a goose*) Mabel and her crazy stable. Look at this place!

*Sizing up the decorations, etc.*

**Stella:** (*Admiring*) If I was a baby king, I'd definitely want to hang out here.

**Sterling:** There *is* no baby king, Stella!

**Stella:** Uh, right. I know that.

**Sterling:** I tell ya right now, if we were any kind of respectable king's horses, we wouldn't put up with this!

**Stella:** Got that right!

**Sterling:** If we were any kind of respectable king's horses, we'd stand up and say, "Hey! There's only one king, and this kid ain't it!"

**Stella:** Amen!

**Sterling:** (*Southern preacher*) I telllll ya truly, friends, if we were *any* kind of *respectable* king's horses, horses who *loved* their king, horses who *adooooored* the one who rules over them... !

**Stella:** Uh-huh!

**Sterling:** ...horses with any *pride* and *integrity* and a *shred* of courage annnnnnd *riiiiiighteousness*... then we'd be *stealing* all the furniture and decorations from this stable so that their little party never...ever... happens!

**Stella:** Yeahhhh, ma- ! Say what? Did you say stealing?

**Sterling:** Yes, I did.

**Stella:** Stealing all the furniture and decorations? Like, just take it?

**Sterling:** That’s what I’m talkin’ ‘bout.

**Stella:** But- but-but, we don’t want to be stealing, Sterling! Stealing is wrong!  
(*To kids*) Isn’t stealing wrong?

*Kids response.*

**Sterling:** Stella, we are the king’s horses. As the king’s horses, we have to protect the king from anybody else who wants to call themselves king! Right?

**Stella:** Right, but...

**Sterling:** You grab the beanbag and the lamp. I’ll grab the decorations.

*CUE 5, sneaky music. **Sterling** and **Stella** begin gathering up as many decorations and furniture fixings as they can carry. It takes them a minute, because they’re greedy about how much they carry. As they’re gathering, **Sammy** steps out.*

**Sammy:** Can you believe these guys? They’re supposed to be the king’s horses, the ones all the other animals are looking up to, and they’re stealing! But I don’t think they’re going to get away with it. Do you? (*Children’s response*) Because they don’t know some things that we know, you know? Like, for instance that there’s a huge, hurking camel waiting right around the corner.

***Stella** is hunched over, trying to drag the bean bag and carry other items, when she runs into **Cam**’s feet. **Cam** has stepped out from the wings.*

**Cam:** Howzit goin’.

**Stella:** (*Gasp*) You!

**Cam:** No, I’m a camel. Sammy over there... she’s a ewe.

**Stella:** She’s-a me?

**Cam:** Don’t try to change the subject.

**Sterling:** (*Seeing **Cam** for the first time*) You!!

***Cam** looks deadpan at the audience, shaking his head.*

**Cam:** *(Slowly, patiently)* No Ca-mel. Ca. Mel. Camel *(pointing to self)*... Ewe *(pointing to **Sammy**)*. Camel, Ewe. Ewe, Camel.

**Stella:** Me camel?

**Sterling:** Did he just call you a camel? *(Threatening)* Did you just call her a camel?!

**Gimpy** arrives behind **Cam**, along with **Molly**.

**Gimpy:** *(To **Sterling**)* You!!

**Sammy:** *(Raising hand)* Right here.

**Gimpy:** No, no not Ewe you. *Him* you!

**Molly:** *(To the horses)* You and you!

**Gimpy:** Alla-yous!

**Molly:** What on earth are you doing with all of our furniture and decorations for the king?!

**Stella:** Stealing it. Mm-hmm. *(Pointing to **Sterling**)* His idea.

**Molly:** *(Gasp)* Stealing!!

**Gimpy:** *(Rolling up sleeves)* Youuuuu!

**Sammy:** *(Raising hand)* Right here.

**Sterling:** That's right, we're stealing it. As the king's horses, we're not going to stand for this nonsense any longer! We're stealing all of it, and there's not a thing you can do about it!

**Molly:** Oh, yeah?!

**Sterling:** *(Staring her down)* Yeahhh!

**Molly:** *(Cowering meekly)* Oh, okay, that's fine. You probably know best.

**Gimpy:** *(Yosemite Sam-like)* You ain't-a goin' nowheres, ya varmints! Now either drop that lamp and that beanbag, or you're gonna force us to come take 'em from ya!

**Sterling:** You?

**Sammy:** *(Rolling eyes, raising hand)* Right here!



**Sterling:** (To **Gimpy**) You think you're going to take these from me?

**Gimpy:** I don't think it, I know it, ya puny pony! Hi-yaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!

**Gimpy strikes a martial-arts pose with his cane and holds it for effect.**

**Sammy:** (To children) Wow. That's impressive, isn't it?

**Gimpy:** (Charging after horses in a limp) Yaaaaaaaaaaa!

*CUE 6, chase music. The Big Chase and Melee begins, with various shticks and bits for all characters. Really, anything and everything can happen here: tugs-of-war over items, with one side letting go and the other spilling onto the ground chases and reverse chases; bits in the audience; 3, 4 and 5 handoffs or thefts of one item, like the lamp. This goes on for a minute.*

**Sammy** steps out and finally hits "slo-mo" on his remote. Everything slows down in a comic slo-mo. With outrageously animated expressions and moves, **Sterling** takes a big swing at **Gimpy** with a chicken or some other stuffed barnyard animal. **Gimpy** ducks it in slo-mo and, taking advantage of **Sterling's** follow-thru, promptly decks **Sterling** in the chops with his own stuffed barnyard animal. **Sterling's** face contorts in slo-mo, the other animals react in slow astonishment, and **Sterling** begins to fall.

**Sammy** snickers to the kids, and hits the "play" button. **Sterling** falls in normal speed, and **Cam** sits on him. **Stella** is on the ground also, and **Molly** sits on her.

**Sterling:** Ugh! Get off-a me, Camel!

**Cam:** Nope.

**Sterling:** (Wailing) But I'm a king's hooooorrrsse!

**Cam:** Not movin''till you say you're sorry.

**Sterling:** Sorry?

**Stella:** Ugh! Maybe we should say it, Sterling.

**Sterling:** Never! I will never say I'm sorry! Not ever! And I will never let a baby be born in this stable and called King! Not ever! It will not happen!

**Mabel:** (Emerging quietly) It already has, Mr. Sterling.

**Sterling:** What?

**Mabel** steps to one side, and **Mary** enters with a newborn in her arms. CUE softer music. The animals watch in awe and astonishment as **Mary** moves slowly toward CS. **Cam** and **Molly** get off of the horses, and all part a way slowly for the mother and child. **Sammy** suddenly has an impulse, pulls the feeding trough over to them and fluffs up the hay. **Mary** thanks her with a smile and nod, and lays the baby down in the trough. All of the **Animals** gather near except for **Molly**, who watches from an uneasy distance.

**Cam:** He's...he's beautiful.

**Stella:** Got that right.

*Beat.*

**Sammy:** So...like, is he really a king?

**Mabel:** Yes, he is, Sammy. He's not just a king...but a king who will reign forever.

**Cam:** Forever?

**Mabel:** Mmm-hmmm. Forever.

**Sammy:** Wow. *(Beat)* I wish I had a present or something to give him, you know?

**Gimpy** nods, then notices the lamp in his hand. Hesitantly and awkwardly, he offers the lamp to **Mary**. She eyes him gently, then receives it with a bemused smile.

**Gimpy:** Ya know, since he's gonna be king forever then he'll still be around in a couple thousand years, when he can actually plug it in. *(Shrug)*

**Mary** looks to **Molly**, off in a corner by herself. When **Mary** speaks, all the animals go still, mesmerized by her voice.

**Mary:** *(Extending hand)* You there...little one...

**Molly:** M- m-me?

**Mary:** Yes. *(Gentle smile)* Come.

**Molly's** eyes get big.

**Molly:** Uh...no. I-I can't.

**Mary:** *(Smile)* Come.

**Molly:** No, no...you don't understand. I'm not *like* the beautiful horses. I'm dirty...a-and dumb...a-and ugly. I shouldn't be next to a *king*.

**Mary:** *(Nod)* Come and see.

*Beat.*

**Molly:** R- r-really?

**Molly** slowly makes her way closer, but stops on the fringe of the crowd.

**Mary:** Come closer.

**Molly** works her way closer, right next to the trough. She peers at the baby's face, and lets out an exclamation of awe. **Mary** and **Mabel** smile.

**Gimpy:** Hey...hey, what's he doing?!

**Cam:** He's reaching for you, Molly!

**Molly's** eyes grow wide as, unseen by audience, the baby grabs her hand.

**Molly:** He's...he's grabbing my hand! My hoof...my hand! He's actually taking me by the hand, Mabel!

**Mabel:** I see that, Molly.

**Molly:** *(Half-whisper, to Mabel)* He likes me better than the pretty king's horses!

**Mary:** He knows your heart.

**Molly:** He does?

**Mary:** Mm-hmm. *(Nodding to horses)* And theirs.

**Sterling** and **Stella** look very concerned. **Sammy** steps out to talk to the children, as **Mary** scoops up the baby and puts him in **Molly's** arms. **Molly** walks out lovingly with the baby, and the others follow closely – all except **Sammy**, who steps out to address the children.

**Sammy:** So that's how it happened that night in Mabel's stable, a long, long time ago. Mabel and Molly and the others made a decision to prepare a place for the king, and that's why the King came. That baby's mother named him Jesus. And all these years later, he's still the king. Oh, there *is* one more part of the story. *(Pulls out the clicker)* But first, we need to fast-forward a little bit. *(Hits the fast-forward button, and does a brief fast-forward shtick. She stops).* Ah. Here we are. More than 2,000 years fast-

forward. This is the part of the story that has you in it. Tonight, you can make the same decision that those animals did. You can make a decision to prepare a place in your heart for the King, and to receive him there. And if you do, you know what? He *will* come.

*Optional invitation here.*

**Sammy:** *(Into walkie-talkie)* Crazy Penguin, this is Wool Pajamas. It appears the barn is now really, *really* secure. Let's party!

*CUE 7, upbeat music. Curtain call and children greet.*